

Soviets Issue Warning On Atomic Land Mines

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MOSCOW, Jan. 18 (UPI)—The Soviet Union told the United States and West Germany tonight that a German proposal for an Iron Curtain belt of atomic land mines "menaces millions of lives" in central Europe.

Moscow Radio said the Kremlin sent notes to the United States and Germany today attacking the plan.

The U. S. Embassy said Ambassador Foy D. Kohler told the Russians he could not accept the Soviet allegations and knew of no basis for the charges. He said he was reporting the note to Washington "under full reserve."

The note to the United

States, Radio Moscow said, claimed that the nuclear belt would violate the Potsdam and other four-power agreements on Germany and "emphasized the danger of letting West Germany get nuclear weapons."

In its note to Germany, the Russians reportedly said the atomic belt "would increase immeasurably the danger of a nuclear conflict in Europe."

It said the notes claimed that "no safety devices could guarantee against accidents such as nuclear blast that could spark off a devastating war . . . A nuclear mine belt dividing the East and West would menace millions of lives both in West Germany and in neighboring countries."

Diplomatic sources here said the notes also warned Bonn of "counter-measures" if the belt is created.

Stephen S. Rosenfeld of the Washington Post Foreign Service reported from Moscow:

Early last month, West German Inspector General Heinz Trettner brought forward a proposal long in the planners' files for a network of atomic mines to be enplaced as fences

against possible Communist ground attack and to be exploded by remote control at American command.

The strategic theory was that the mines would compensate for assumed Communist superiority in manpower and would give the defenders time to prepare to counterattack.

The proposal represented the preference of European strategists to wield the threat of immediate use of nuclear weapons against an invader. The American stress is on use of conventional forces first.

The proposal elicited widespread alarm among Communists and others in both West and East. American sources in NATO reacted by saying that it should be studied as a possible element of NATO's defenses.

The proposal led U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara to reveal that atomic demolition charges have existed for five years in NATO's European stockpile and that the NATO supreme commander has plans for their use under certain conditions.

Since the December flare-up, American and West German sources have conveyed the impression that the mine belt is neither an imminent nor an integral part of NATO's defense plan.

This has made no visible mark on Soviet propaganda, which seized at the mine proposal to keep anti-German feeling high. It has spoken of the mines as another guise by which Bonn might gain access to its own nuclear arms.

The note also amounted to a direct diplomatic consultation with the United States, the first that the new Soviet leaders have joined.